# V

# THE TYRANNY BROKEN

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

With the nineteenth century we come to a period in which the printed picture may be said to have come of age. Not only did it use all the older processes but it invented more new ones than had been known in all previous history. I imagine that the number of printed pictures produced between 1800 and 1901 was probably considerably greater than the total number of printed pictures that had been produced before 1801. They were made for all classes of society and for every conceivable purpose. By the end of the century the exactly repeatable pictorial statement had become a commonplace in books, in periodicals, and in the daily newspapers. It was spread on exterior walls for advertising and propaganda, and on interior ones for decoration. It had become an absolute necessity in manufacture and engineering of every variety. The most important single development in the century was the discovery and exploitation of photography and photographic process. First it eliminated the draughtsman, and then it eliminated the engraver from the making of exactly repeatable pictorial statements, and after that it went on

to develop ways of repeating such statements in unlimited quantities. Such statements were no longer confined to the life of a single printing surface.

As the community became engulfed in printed pictures, it looked to them for most of its visual information. Even museum experts who have the original works of art at hand are apt to make their comparisons by juxtaposing photographic reproductions rather than by placing the originals side by side. As people became habituated to absorbing their visual information from photographic pictures printed in printers' ink, it was not long before this kind of impersonal visual record had a most marked effect on what the community thought it saw with its own eyes. It began to see photographically, it stopped talking about photographic distortion, and finally it adopted the photographic image as the norm of truthfulness in representation. A faith was put in the photograph that had never been and could not be put in the older hand-made pictures. There have been many revolutions in thought and philosophy, in science and religion, but I believe that never in the history of men has there been a more complete revolution than that which has taken place since the middle of the nineteenth century in seeing and visual recording. Photographs give us visual evidence about things that no man has ever seen or ever will see directly. A photograph is today accepted as proof of the existence of things and shapes that never would have been believed on the evidence of a hand-made picture. The nineteenth century began by believing that what was reasonable was true and it wound up by believing that what it saw a photograph of was true—from the finish of a horse race to the nebulae in the sky. The photograph has been accepted as showing that impossible desideratum of the historian—*wie es eigentlich gewesen*—how it actually was.

At the end of the eighteenth century there were several remarkable innovations in the graphic techniques and those that were utilized to make their materials. Bewick developed the method of using engraving tools on the end of the wood. Senefelder discovered lithography. Blake made relief etchings. Early in the nine-

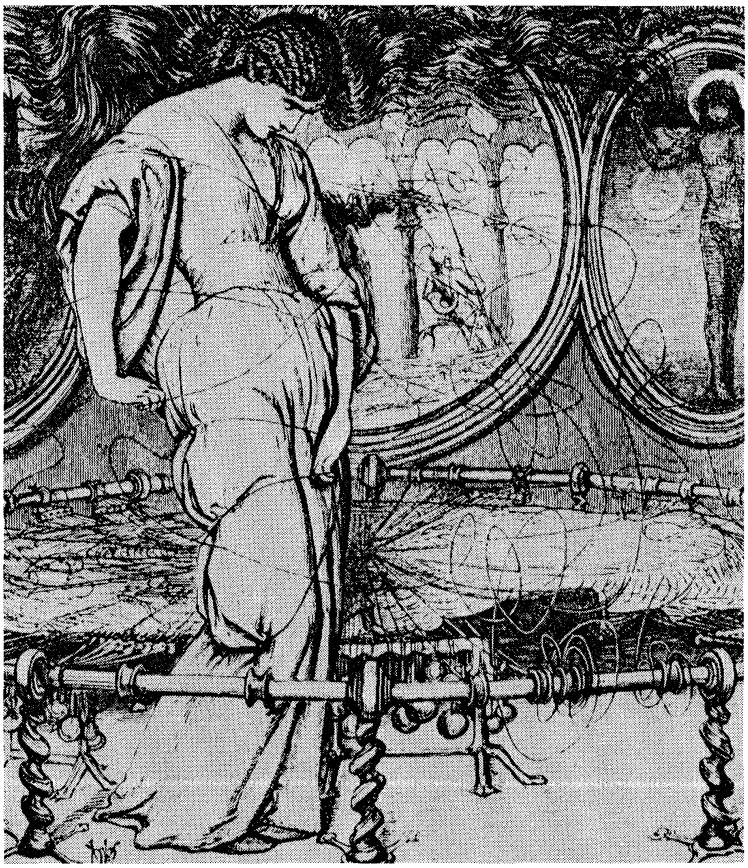
teenth century Stanhope, Clymer, Koenig, and others introduced new kinds of type presses, which for strength surpassed anything that had previously been known. Koenig's machine not only was operated by power instead of human muscle, but its mechanical design required a complete change in the methods of inking the printing surfaces, which in turn necessitated an abandonment of the ancient practice of lowering the faces of the blocks and the substitution for it of the system of overlays. Photography, although the first tentative steps towards it were taken in the eighteenth century, did not play any important role until the middle of the century, after which it brought about a catastrophic revolution, the extent of which is not even today fully recognized.

For a long time the traditional graphic techniques of the copper continued to be used. They held their heads bravely against the newer processes until about the middle of the century, when their inability to compete against the younger methods began to tell against them. For a while, after that, they maintained their existence through the snobbery of a tradition of the best, but long before the end of the century they had definitely entered upon decline towards the atrophy which has ultimately overtaken them. Today the old style line engraving, mezzotint, and reproductive etching, have for all practical purposes ceased to exist. The various forms of etching lead a precarious existence among artists who happen to like them as media for the exhibition of their skill and deftness in hallowed techniques, and there are still collectors who take an interest in the current production of minor works of art in antiquated and therefore highly respectable techniques. But, as a medium that still has work to do in the world, etching, aside from its utilization in the photographic processes, is over with. Today it has no more social or economic importance than has the ability to drive a four in hand in front of a coach. Wood-engraving and woodcutting are in much the same straits as etching and engraving. All have become precious—accomplishments of which their practitioners are vain—much like the acquisition of a good French accent by one who has nothing to say in any language.

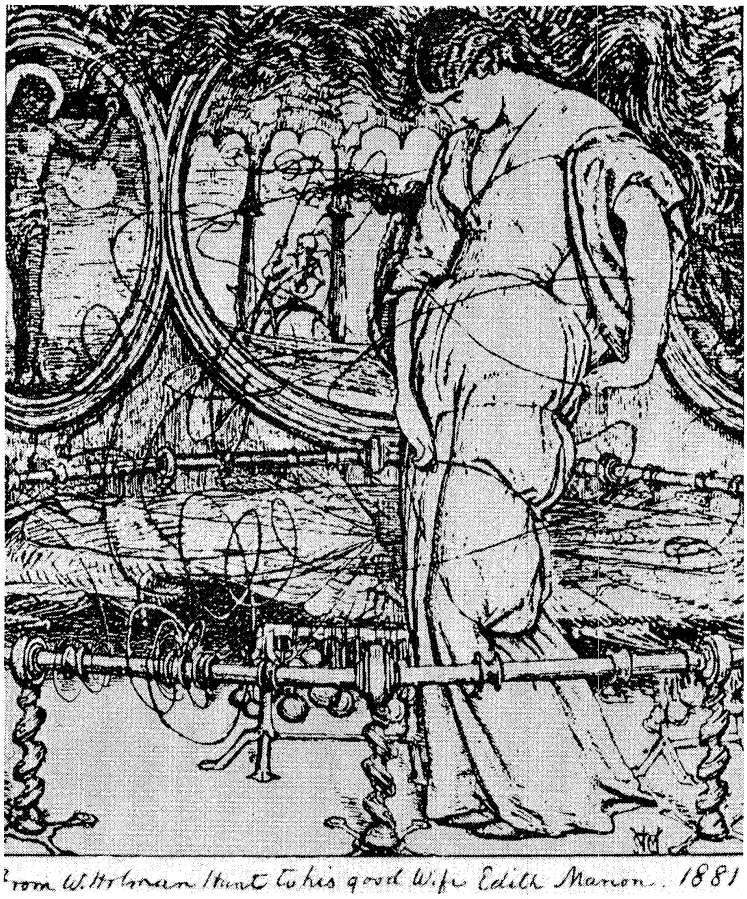
In thinking about all this it is worth while to reflect upon the fact that with a very few remarkable exceptions the greater artistic single sheet prints since the end of the first quarter of the sixteenth century have been made in techniques which at the time were currently and familiarly used for utilitarian purposes and especially for the illustration of books.

If we stop at eighteen hundred and look back at the prints that had been made up to that time, one of the outstanding characteristics of the movement represented in them seems to have been a gradual withdrawal from print making by the more important artists. In the fourteen-hundreds we find such masters as Pollaiuolo and Mantegna, Schongauer and the young Dürer, making prints with their own hands. In the fifteen-hundreds the list of important painters who made prints with their own hands is very large—the mature Dürer, Holbein, Altdorfer, Cranach, Lucas of Leyden, Titian, Parmigiano, Baroccio, Spagnoletto, among others. In the sixteen-hundreds among the men who made prints with their own hands were Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Ruysdael, Claude le Lorrain, Guido Reni, Guercino, Carlo Maratti, and many more. Rubens made only one or two etchings with his own hands, but he exercised immediate supervision over the prints that he published after his own paintings, proof reading and correcting them until they met with his approval. In the next century, however, the eighteenth, we discover that of the major French artists, Watteau made only six or seven immaterial sketches on the copper, and Fragonard a handful of charming little prints of no particular importance. In England Hogarth made many plates after his own pictures,—perhaps the last instance in which a major artist consistently did reproductive work. In Italy the only outstanding painters to etch were Canaletto and the elder Tiepolo, and their etched work is small in volume. Piranesi was a commercial manufacturer of architectural prints—conveyors of information—and but rarely let his genius interfere with his business. Only in Spain did a great and powerful painter turn to etching and aquatint for the expression of ideas that he had not previously given to the world in paint. If Goya had been in

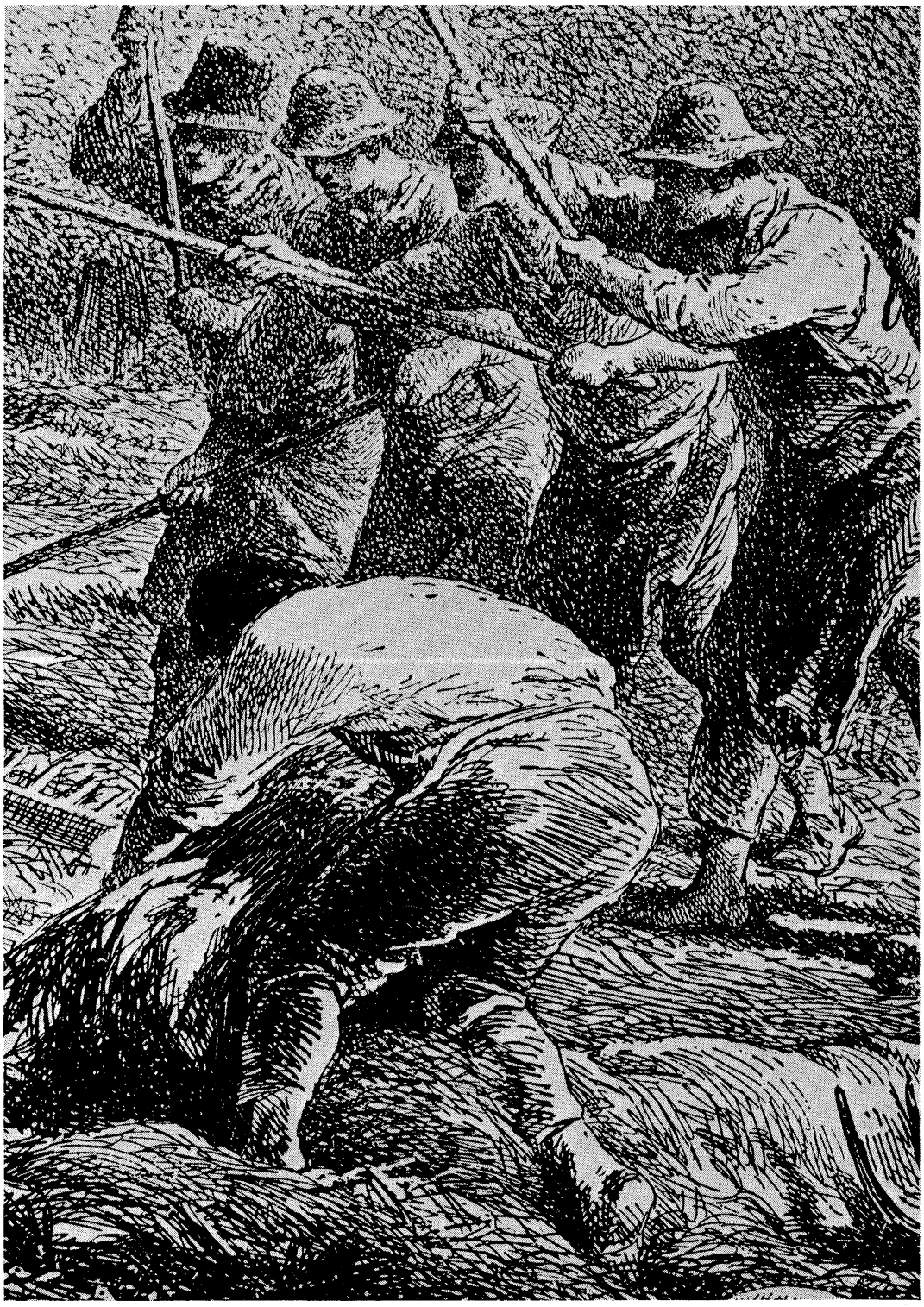
57. Portion of a wood-engraving of a drawing after Giotto, from *Arena Chapel, Padua*, 1860. About actual size.



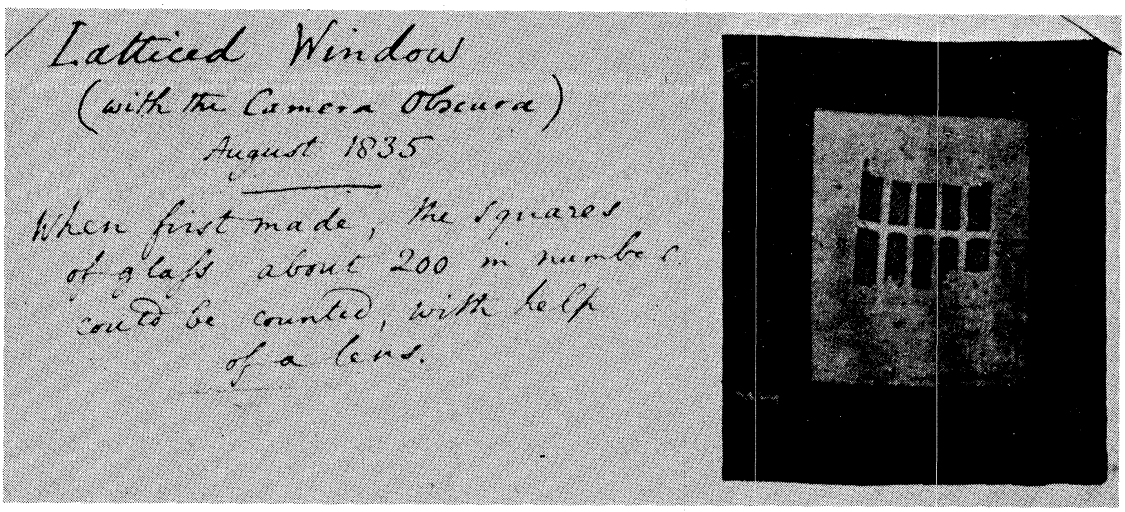
58. Wood-engraving of Holman Hunt's drawing of 'The Lady of Shalott', from the pre-Raphaelite *Tennyson* of 1857. About actual size.




59. Reproduction of a collotype from a photograph of Hunt's original drawing on the block. About actual size.

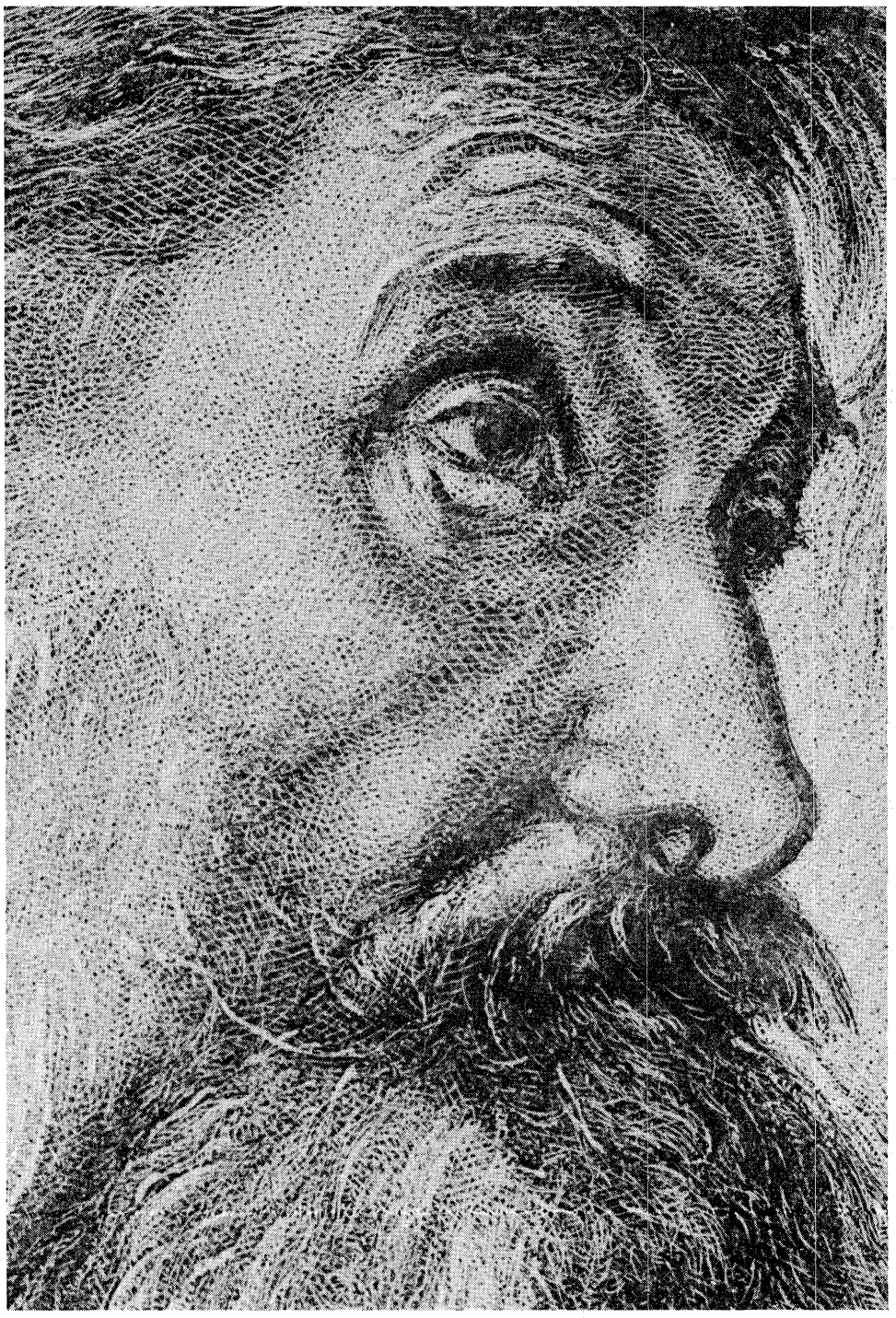


60. Portion of a relief print in the Comte process, by Charles Jacque. Presumably in the 1870's. About actual size.




61. Photograph of a Latticed Window at Lacock Abbey made by Fox Talbot in August, 1835. About actual size.

62. Flaxman's relief 'Deliver us from Evil', as engraved by Bolton through a photograph on the woodblock. About 1861. About actual size.



63. Head from an old drawing, as engraved by Linton through a photograph on the woodblock. Enlarged.

64. Portion of a pen lithograph, by Stothard, from the *Polyautographic Album* of 1803. Enlarged.

France or Italy it is to be doubted whether he would have broken away from the accepted code of procedure and himself done important work in etching, but, as it was, there was no competent school of engravers in Spain to intervene between him and his public. He had to do the work with his own hands. Provinciality and ignorance sometimes have a great deal to do with originality.

To translate these facts into other terms, the world during the eighteenth century had ceased to receive first hand exactly repeatable pictorial statements or communications from its most important artists. What it got were second- and third-hand statements of hearsay evidence. The same thing was true of the illustrations in its books.

Thanks to the introduction of economies and notions of business efficiency in the engravers' shops there had become universal the practice of splitting up among various hands the different steps in the making of exactly repeatable pictorial statements. At the end of the chain stood the original draughtsman or painter. Then came the draughtsman for the engraver. Frequently at this point came a specialist who made the preliminary etching on the plate. And finally came the engraver himself, who in many instances had never seen the original of which he was supposed to make a reproduction, and who rarely hesitated to correct what he considered the poor drawing or the lack of elegance in the copy that lay before him. In the addenda at the end of the 1861 edition of Jackson and Chatto's *History of Wood-engraving* there is a defence of this latter procedure. Rossetti's wails of anguish over the way that the Dalziel engraving shop corrected his drawings for Tennyson are famous among people who are interested in Victorian English poetry.

This subdivision of labour, although, as we have seen, it began in the sixteenth century, was perhaps carried further in the peculiarly nineteenth century medium of wood-engraving than in any other. At the risk of mixing up my chronological account I shall deal for a moment with something that did not come about

in its fully developed state until the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century.

In wood-engraving it became the standard practice to have a draughtsman make a drawing of a painting or whatever it was of which a picture was wanted. Then this drawing was redrawn on the engraver's block by a specialist draughtsman who was supposed to know how a drawing should be made for an engraver—even though in many instances this secondary draughtsman had never seen the original. Only then did the engraver begin his work. I recall one instance in which the final engraving was done by at least four different engravers, each according to his speciality of landscapes, figures, architecture, skies, etc. I have no doubt that there were many more instances of this kind of thing. The individual engravers no longer signed their work, which bore the name of the shop in which the blocks were turned out. In France the engraver continued to sign his work long after he had ceased to do so in England.

This subdivision of specialized skill was carried to its final limit of economic practicability and artistic and reportorial folly in the big double page wood-engravings that appeared in the popular weekly papers of the middle of the century. To show how this worked: The artists in the field or at the front would send back little sketches of the most generalized and undetailed variety. These were then copied in large size on the big blocks for the centre pages by draughtsmen attached to the home offices, who supplied the detail and the tonality missing in the little sketches. During the Crimean War Constantin Guys was the field artist of the *Illustrated London News*, and his little drawings were blown up by Gavarni in London. The big blocks were made by clamping together many little pieces of wood. In America, when the final drawing had been made on the block, the clamps were removed from the block, it was disassembled, and each piece was given to a different engraver in a quantity production shop. Each engraver then engraved the middle of the surface of his piece of the big block, while carefully leaving untouched a little margin about his work. When the little

pieces of wood had been treated in this way they were reassembled and clamped together again, after which the big block went to a particularly skilled engraver whose task it was to knit the picture together by engraving the untouched margins of the little pieces in such a way that their joins would not be too strikingly noticeable. The result was only what might have been expected. In the first place, all the engravers had to engrave as much alike as possible, using a predetermined system or network of engraved lines in which they had been trained. The prints from the big blocks were thus second- or third- or fourth-hand accounts, or even badly jumbled accounts by many different people, of what things were supposed to look like. Not only was there no impersonal statement such as was later to be supplied by the camera, but there was no first-hand statement at all. The responsibility for pictorial statements had been by-passed, and such statements as were actually made had been reduced to a flat dull plane of reasonability.

Under the circumstances, no faith could be put in any exactly repeated pictorial statement of fact beyond what might seem to be within the realm of general common sense and reasonability of people who literally knew nothing at first-hand and who had never seen a first-hand statement of what was being stated. Anything that to them seemed unreasonable, or as they used to say in New England 'agin Natur', or mixed up or unclear, was suspect. When a report of what happens in the Hindu Kush has to be made in such a way as to appear reasonable to persons who have never been more than forty miles from St. Paul's the report will bear very little resemblance to the fact. I personally have little doubt that this rationalized and untrustworthy hearsay visual evidence had a great deal to do with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' general demand for reasonability. I am certain that it had much to do with the prevailing lack of imagination in eighteenth century art and literature and the dominance in them of varieties of common sense. If there had been hand cameras in the days when Boswell took Dr. Johnson on that trip to the Hebrides, no

one would have thought that he should take his diary of the trip to Malone to have its sharp notation of details excised and its place taken by common sense generalities.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the technique of etching and of mixed etching and engraving, especially at the hands of such men as reproduced the drawings and paintings of Turner, was carried to such a state of technical surety and expertness as had never before and has not since been equalled. It is one of the greater ironies that the much touted Revival of Etching, which the books tell us began about the middle of the nineteenth century, was actually not a revival of the craft of etching at all but the adoption of the technique by a group of on the whole rather poor draughtsmen and incompetent technicians who in one way or another managed to gain the attention of the public. In a period, like that of the 1890's, in which Whistler was often said, and by many believed, to be the greatest etcher since Rembrandt, it was easy to forget not only the work of such masters of technique as the Findens, but the very existence of such great draughtsmen on the copper as Piranesi, Canaletto, Goya, Delacroix and his fellow romantics, and of such Englishmen as Hogarth, Rowlandson, Girtin, and Cotman. It was also distressingly easy to overlook the etchings of such contemporaries as Manet and Degas. The emphasis on etching as such was an escape from the problem of draughtsmanship and design. When a man asks do you not think this is a good etching, his words relate to the craft and not to the picture—an inversion of interest and importances that has fooled a great many innocent people. It is a hang over from the eighteenth century's interest in the moiré of engraved lines and its forgetfulness of the picture.

Original line engraving produced but two still generally recognized masters during the nineteenth century—Blake and Gaillard —the one a very incompetent technician and draughtsman, the other a portraitist of the type exemplified in oil paint by Balthazar Denner. Blake, who was born in 1757, based his style on the prints by the weaker stylizing followers of Marc Antonio and was com-

pletely out of sympathy with the point of view of such a man as Rembrandt. It is to be noted that the appreciation of Blake's work has been confined in largest measure to persons of bookish tastes rather than of visual tastes and experiences, and that it has never extended beyond the boundaries of the English speaking peoples. When considered in connection with the comparative poverty of those peoples in the arts of design, this last fact has implications of great interest. Gaillard was one of the leaders in a belated French mid-century revolt against the tyranny of the traditional lozenge and dot structure in line engraving. His ideal would seem to have been a sort of hand-made daguerreotype, and his linear structure got below the threshold of what for most persons is the limit of unaided eyesight. Many people had, and, alas, still have, the notion that the more niggling lines an etcher or engraver can lay in a given space the more remarkable a technician he is. It is perilously easy to forget that after all an etching or engraving is a drawing and that the most important thing in a drawing is draughtsmanship. Line engraving may be said to have met its Waterloo with the invention of a method of engraving on steel for the making of bank notes. With this it took little time for it to become a trade and not an art.

The two most interesting developments of the first half of the nineteenth century took place in wood-engraving and in lithography. Wood-engraving was carried to its greatest and silliest peaks of virtuosity in England—a country that never took kindly to lithography even though it used a great deal of it for menial purposes. I have a friend whose opinions are much like those of the late Queen Victoria—you can count on him to express what most Englishmen thought seventy-five years ago. He tells me that a lithograph has no character and is merely a reproduction of a drawing, and is therefore not comparable to an etching or engraving, which has an exquisite artistic character no matter how dull it may be. In any event, lithography received its greatest development in France, which also made great use of wood-engraving, though never in the pedantic manner that delighted

the English. It may be that if I had been born and educated in Central Europe I should find the German and Austrian graphic output of the nineteenth century of more interest and significance than I do. Unless I am horribly mistaken the only artistically worthwhile prints made in Germany during the greater part of the century were those that came out of the printing office of the *Fliegende Blaetter* and other such irreverent and unsolemn places.

The development of the Bewickian wood-engraving in England is interesting for reasons other than its minor artistic merits. It provides a typical case history of what happens when a new process or technique is introduced and is not rapidly put to use by men of genius. It is particularly valuable because the material is copious and the data are in general easily accessible. The prime factors involved, in addition to the finely reticulated surface of the wood-block, were the paper, the ink, the method of inking the block, and the press. Except for several minor innovations in the design of the press, these things had remained without material change from the fourteen-hundreds until about 1800, and on the continent of Europe did so until a generation later. It was the insistent demand for the new wood engravings that caused all these things to undergo the great changes that took place in them by the middle of the century. William Morris and his typographical followers have finely damned all the works of that period, forgetting that they themselves were among them. But, much influence as the Morris doctrine has had in certain limited and snobbish sorts of printing, the facts remain that our modern techniques and our modern requirements come out of what may be called the Bewickian revolution. It is to be noted that the final test of the technical skill of the pressman is to be looked for in how cleanly he prints his fine textured blocks and half tones and not in how much ink he can load on his types.

Bewick, in the eighteenth century, had been able to secure good impressions from his blocks—which were not comparable in fineness of texture to our ordinary half tones—but only by rubbing

the paper down onto the inked blocks with an engraver's burnisher. Moreover he had been able to secure excellent impressions only by using little pieces of the yellowish, very smooth, and very thin paper with which at that time the Chinese packed their shipments of tea to England. The impressions of his blocks which appeared in 1797, in the first edition of the first volume of his *British Birds*, were actually so poor that in 1800, in response to popular demand, he issued a volume containing impressions of them printed on one side of the paper only and without text. When we of today look at these impressions of 1800, the first thing we are aware of is the exceedingly poor quality of the prints from the blocks. Much of the detail is literally illegible. No newspaper of today, running off its edition of half a million copies in a few hours, would tolerate what Bewick in 1800 thought good. It was not until towards the end of his life that Bewick was able to secure a supply of India or China paper sufficient in quantity to run off a very small edition de luxe of impressions from the blocks of the *British Birds* which really showed what was in them.

In 1809 there was published a slender volume of text and wood-engravings under the title *Religious Emblems, Being a Series of Engravings on Wood . . . from Designs drawn on the Blocks Themselves by J. Thurston Esq.*, some copies of which had the peculiarity that the text was printed on book paper while the blocks were separately struck off on sheets of China paper that were then bound up in appropriate places between the text pages. In 1810 a small number of copies of Rogers's *Pleasures of Memory* was issued in which both the text and the wood-engravings, by Clennell after Stothard, were printed on very thin smooth China paper. I can recall no earlier instance of either practice, that used in the *Emblems* or that used in the *Pleasures*, both of which have become well-known ways of giving a snobbish appeal to picture books, usually of minor artistic interest. The engravings in the *Emblems* were rather elaborate essays in the production of tones extending from light greys to the fullest blacks. Those in the *Pleasures* were called facsimiles of line drawings. The quality of the prints in these

two volumes is far better than any that Bewick was ever able to produce in his regularly issued volumes.

In 1817 there was a limited edition of *Puckle's Club*, in which the remarkably fine textured illustrations—far finer than any that had previously been produced—were struck off on thin China or India paper that was mounted on the text pages. The equally fine textured tail pieces were printed directly on the paper used in the text, and much of their work vanished because the lines of the blocks were so much finer than the texture of the paper.

In 1822 there appeared Savage's *Hints on Decorative Printing*, a very de luxe effort, which contained, in addition to many costly experiments in colour printing, two of the most amazing and remarkably foolish emulations or adaptations of copper plate techniques to engraving on wood that have ever been made. They were printed on China paper mounted down, and were accompanied by impressions from the cancelled blocks carefully printed on the paper used for the type pages. The difference between the impressions on the two sorts of paper is striking. So far as I recall this is the first book in which impressions from the cancelled printing surfaces of the illustrations were included. A mere trick of snobbery in this instance serves a useful end for the student of techniques.

In 1824, what was perhaps the apogee of the search for fineness of black line linear texture was reached in Henderson's *History of Ancient and Modern Wines*, the head-pieces and initials in which also had to be printed on India paper that was mounted on the regular paper of the text. Here again it is possible to see the difference made by the paper, for Bohn reprinted many of the blocks on good smooth paper of a commercial variety in his edition of Jackson and Chatto's *History* of *Wood-engraving*. After the Henderson very few attempts were made to rival on wood the fineness of the etched or engraved lines on copper. The cost of printing, and the difficulty of procuring the proper exotic paper, made it impossible to supply the greater public with illustrated books of this kind. Wood-engraving, like type printing, was

not to come of age until it had come down from the higher levels of expensiveness and become a rather cheap and common thing.

The one way in which these wonderful but silly books resembled each other was that, even when their illustrations were supposed to be facsimiles of pen or pencil lines, they smelled to Heaven of engraving. The Rogers of 1810 was long famous for the accuracy with which it reproduced the quality of Stothard's lines, and remained so until after the pervasion of the photomechanical processes. As we look at its illustrations today their outstanding quality comes from the fact that their lines are engraved and reek of the engraver's tool.

Bewick, if not a great artist, was a very original one with a good deal to say of an amusing anecdotal kind. His sketches were no more than preliminary studies for the finished engravings that came from his hand, with their free, bold, and often brilliant representations of textures. The one way in which his prints differ technically from all previous woodcuts and engravings on copper is that the linear structure is sometimes in black lines on white grounds and sometimes in white lines on black grounds. Otherwise they have the same kind of a net of rationality, although a different one, as the earlier prints. The other two original wood-engravers of the first part of the century in England, Blake and Calvert, had much the same technical approach as Bewick, but modified in practice by their so different personalities and interests. They were more interested in making their statements than in exhibiting their mere virtuosity in the use of the engraver's tool. But this cannot be said of many of their contemporaries and followers, for whom their engraving was of much more importance than the drawings on the blocks. Even when, as in the case of Harvey, they made the drawings they engraved, the final result was of much more interest as a *tour de force* of engraving than it was as a design. As early as 1821 the idea had grown up for wood-engraving, just as it had long before for copper engraving, that a wood-engraving should look like a wood-engraving and be all neat and tidy with its net of lines.

We find this clearly stated in the footnote at the beginning of the first Eclogue in Thornton's *Vergil*, of 1821, where Thornton says, 'The Illustrations of this English Pastoral are by the famous Blake, the Illustrator of Young's *Night Thoughts*, and Blair's *Grave*; who designed and engraved them himself. This is mentioned, as they display less of art than genius, and are much admired by some eminent painters.' Thornton did not think to mention that in his horror at genius as distinct from art he had had a number of Blake's blocks remade by other more routine hands, in such a way that they would be more 'artistic'. I recall no other instance in which we get so clear a verbal statement of the tyranny of the standardized network of the engraved line, but if we use our eyes we can find many others with great ease.

Harvey, after working with Bewick as an apprentice, transferred to the studio of B. R. Haydon, the painter, there to learn drawing—in itself a commentary upon many things. While with Haydon he copied Haydon's painting of the 'Death of Lucius Quintus Dentatus' on what was then considered an enormous block, for it was 15 by 11½ inches in size. He finished the block after having worked at it for much of three years, and then, to his chagrin, discovered that there was no printing press in England powerful enough to produce a proper impression of it. It was not until the early 1820's that Johnson, the printer, discovered that the Columbian Press, then but recently introduced into England by Clymer of Philadelphia, when rigged with a much lengthened bar and operated by two strong men instead of a single boy, was strong enough to print Harvey's block. Johnson's account of this incident and his account of the other presses then in use in England, as given in his *Typographia* of 1824, are of prime interest to anyone curious about the problems presented by the new graphic technique. Incidentally, Johnson had to work out a new printer's ink that would be both thin enough and opaque enough for the printing of Harvey's block. From that time on the problem presented by the ink became a matter for serious thought, for it could no longer be coped with by the traditional recipes. In 1817 ink

rollers were put on the market to take the place of the ink balls that had been in use since the fifteenth century.

It soon became evident that the greater public, while it had little interest in the virtuosity of the wood-engravers or in wood-engraving as such, was very much interested in pictorial information at a small price. Thus it may be that the most important event in the middle history of wood-engraving in England was the founding by Charles Knight in 1832 of his weekly *Penny Magazine*. It was produced on a cylinder press, operated by steam, which raised the output of two men working eight hours a day from the 1,000 sheets reached by the old hand-operated press to 16,000 sheets printed on both sides. Within a year its circulation reached the astonishing number of 200,000. It owed much of its popularity to the fact that it was illustrated with coarse wood-engravings and was directed at a public which previously had been given but slight attention by the publishers of picture books. This public liked pictures and drawings and cared nothing about methods of reproduction. It was, therefore, not very long before the emphasis in the illustration of books shifted from the fact that the pictures were engravings to the fact that they were supposed to be facsimiles of drawings. The early illustrations of this kind were dull enough hack work, but finally in 1857 there appeared the affectionately remembered pre-Raphaelite *Tennyson*, full of illustrations drawn on the blocks by such men as Hunt, Millais and Rossetti. In that year there appeared the first number of *Once a Week*, which called to its service some remarkable pictorial talent.

About 1860, a minor wood-engraver, named Thomas Bolton, had the idea of sensitizing the surface of his wood-block, on which he had a photograph printed from a negative after a relief by Flaxman. He made his engraving through the photograph as though it had been a drawing in tints on the block. A print of it is to be found in the Jackson and Chatto *Treatise on Wood-engraving* in Bohn's edition, in which it was included as a novelty, but without any particular comment. So far as I have noticed it represented the first effective step towards that final substitution of photo-

graphy for draughtsmanship in informative book illustration that could be printed at the same time as the text it accompanied. When we reach the page in the Jackson and Chatto which contains the impression from Bolton's block we seem to step into another world of vision, and for the first time to meet a repeatable pictorial statement in which we can have a little confidence. If we read our history backwards—which is the only way in which it can be read intelligently—this neglected little print by Bolton must be regarded as in many ways the most important wood-engraving that had been made up to its time. The history of the next forty years of book illustration is little more than an account of the pervasion of Bolton's idea, and its final development into the trivial, boring, and empty virtuosity of engraving over a photographic basis, that was, so short a time ago, the much vaunted characteristic of the American school of wood-engraving. It was displaced at the end of the century by a process of making photographic pictures in which even the engraver himself was dispensed with.

From the point of view of their artistic content, I have little doubt that the most remarkable wood-engravings of the nineteenth century were some of those for which the drawings on the blocks were made by Daumier in France.

Now to turn to the lithograph—Senefelder in his youth was a musical composer who had great difficulty in getting his music published, and who was too poor to pay for it himself. This turned his mind to the techniques of music printing. In the course of his thought about this he discovered, by an accident which involved a wash list, the principle on which lithography works. From being a poor musician he turned into an inventor and promoter. Unfortunately for him he could not get an effective patent and the first description of his process was made by someone else. However, within a few years his representatives and emulators were busy in many of the major cities of Europe. He made his discovery in 1797, and within the next year or so had himself introduced it into England. By 1803 the *Polyautographic Album* had been published in London. By the next year a similar publication under a

German version of the same name had been published in Berlin. Several French artists, notably Vivant Denon, learned lithography during the Napoleonic invasions of Germany, and, carrying the technique back to Paris, succeeded, after the Restoration, in getting the highest in the land to practise it as a diversion. In this he was undoubtedly helped by the fact that one of the earliest lithographic portraits had been made in England by the young refugee Duc de Montpensier of his brother who was later to become King Louis Philippe. In 1816, Engelmann, an Alsatian, set up a lithographic printing establishment in Paris.

In Germany and in England the new process had little luck in those it attracted to its use, and its possibilities lay dormant while second-rate and worse draughtsmen used it in imitation of timid drawings in pen and ink and in chalks. In 1807 in Germany it was used to produce copies of the pen drawings by Dürer for the Emperor Maximilian's prayer book, which was shortly followed by a long series of volumes devoted to the reproduction of paintings and drawings in famous collections. To put it mildly they were villainous libels. Also there were some drawing books in which misguided men attempted to show small boys and girls how they really ought not to draw. And there were a few timid romantic landscapes, and ruins, and old buildings. In England the *Album* of 1803 contained drawings by such men as Benjamin West and Stothard and a number of the lesser landscapists, but none of them shows that lithography had anything more in store than the reproduction of academic and timid pedantries. There are no artistically noteworthy English lithographs, and very few German ones.

In France, however, by 1825 there had come to the new process such men as Ingres, Géricault, and Delacroix. About that same year, Goya, from his retirement in southern France, broke forth with his famous set of four large lithographs of bull fights, to which he brought all his painter's bold draughtsmanship, and all his feeling for design, for colour, and for atmosphere. For those with the wit to understand, these prints were the declaration of independence of the new medium. He showed that it was made to the

hand of the painter accustomed to draw with the brush and was not confined to the hands of the engraver craftsmen. In 1828 Delacroix illustrated Goethe's *Faust*. Its effect was like that of a bombshell. Paris was rapidly filled with practitioners of the new technique, among whom were many of the best painters of the day. In 1830 Philipon started the *Caricature*, which was followed in 1832 by the *Charivari*. Philipon began to publish Daumier's work early in the thirties, and, with one short interval in the middle of the century, his work continued to appear until 1871. Few of the French painters of the nineteenth century who achieved great and abiding renown did not at one time or another try their hands at lithography. A mere short list of some of them—Prudhon, Ingres, Decamps, Diaz, Géricault, Delacroix, Chasseriau, Daumier, Millet, Corot, Puvis, Manet, Degas, Cezanne, Pissarro, Renoir, Gauguin, Redon, and Toulouse-Lautrec—is sufficient. Alongside these painters there were professional makers of prints, as, for instance, Isabey and Raffet, Gavarni and Doré, who greatly affected public taste and thought. It is to be doubted whether any of all the mediums for making prints called to itself in so short a time such a group of great masters as made lithographs in Paris between 1825 and 1901.

The advantage of lithography was that the artist's drawing and the print were practically identical—there was no reworking of his drawing by another hand, let alone any copying of it in another medium, and it could be made in any way and with any or no linear scheme as the artist liked. It afforded the most complete gamut of tones between white and black, and achieved them with the greatest ease. A lithograph could be as loose and sketchy as Manet's 'Race Course', or as elaborately worked as Delacroix's 'Sister of Du Guesclin'—in other words it could do anything between the first roughest pencil or chalk sketch to something that can only be compared to a fully developed and detailed oil painting. It completely did away with any need for the translator-middle man-engraver with his inevitable systematized grammar and syntax of linear webbing. Its defect was that, like the copper-plate pro-

cesses, it had to be printed in a different press than that which printed type, and thus called for two separate printings if it were to be used as a book illustration.

Many of Daumier's finest designs fell victims of an attempt to circumvent this double printing. He made his lithographs as usual, but they were transferred to metal plates and then bitten so that they could be printed as relief blocks with and at the same time as the text of the newspaper. As it was then impossible, in the short time at command, to prepare the 'make ready' required to bring out the colour values of the lines, these prints in the *Charivari* lost most of their colour and variety of tone. Little as print collectors may fancy them because of their lack of colour and that curious thing the collectors call 'quality', these quasi-lithographs number among them some of the most magisterial prints that Daumier ever made.

From the particular point of view here taken, it is interesting to notice that Daumier never became a professional lithographer and never made any prints to show his virtuosity in the medium in which he did most of his work. If I recall correctly he made but one reproductive print after another man's picture in all his life. He simply drew with the lithographic material on a piece of lithographic stone, and with it said what he had to say about life and politics, with never a thought that he should show off what tricks he could do with the medium. It is probable that in this he ranks with Mantegna, Titian, the old Rembrandt, Goya, and Degas, who so dominated their graphic processes that they gave them but little thought for what they might be in their own right, and certainly gave no thought to the notion that it is an artist's duty to stay within and to exploit what the community regards as the characteristic qualities of his medium.

Lithography's final flare-up took place in the last decade of the nineteenth century, when it was triumphantly used for a short while as the simplest and easiest medium in which to produce advertising posters, some of which were of enormous size. The great master of this episode was Toulouse-Lautrec.

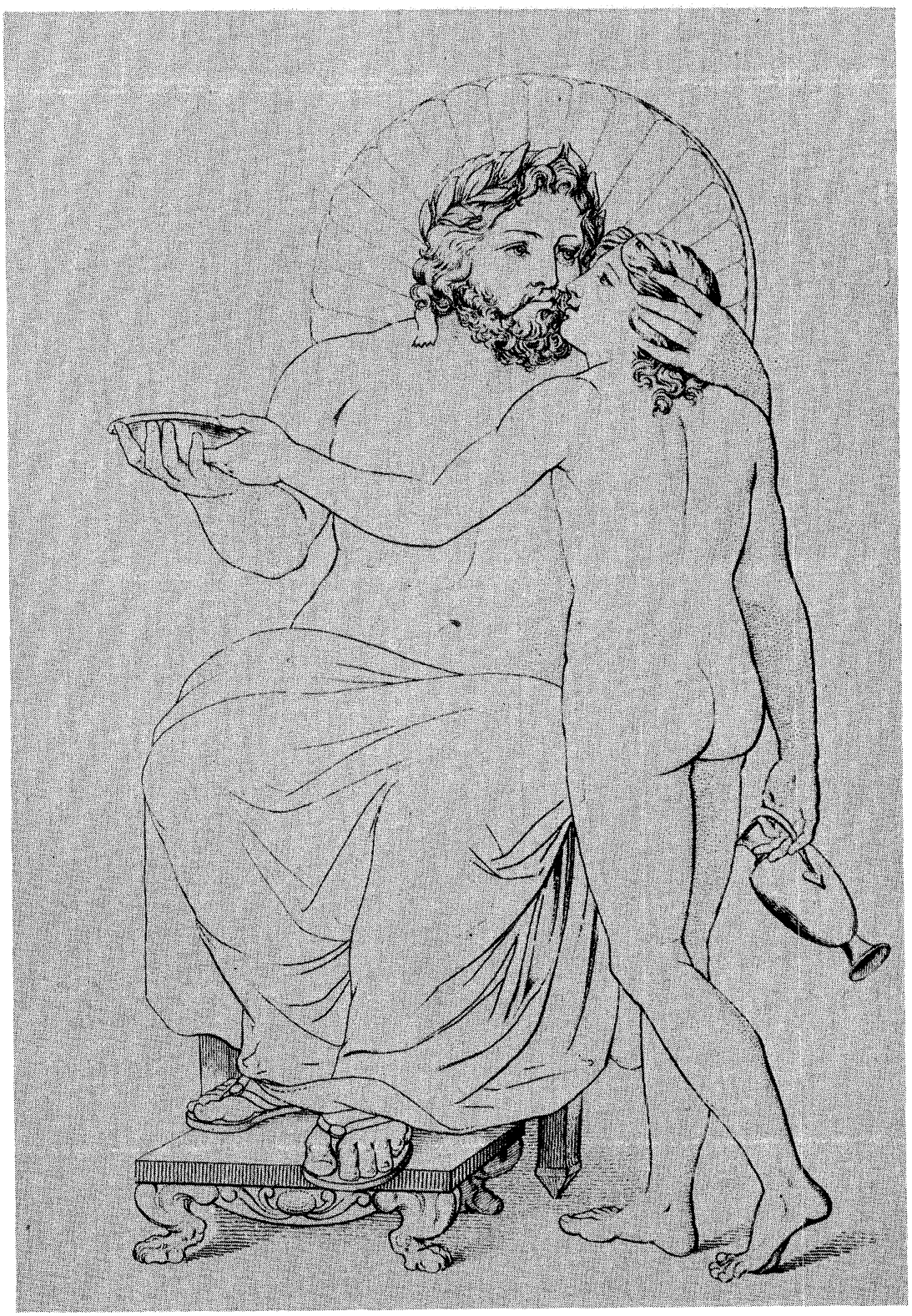
It is amusing to notice that as the English and German speaking worlds have become acquainted with the graphic work of these French painters of the nineteenth century whose names I have mentioned—an acquaintanceship that hardly goes back of the first World War—the popularity of these prints by men who cared nothing about the traditional conventions for the dress and conduct of nice prints in society, has brought about a very remarkable change in taste and feeling about prints of all kinds. It has worked backwards and brought out into the light many earlier prints that were overlooked because they did not conform to the tricks and virtuosities which for generations had appealed to the 'graphic hearts and eyes' of the connoisseurs of the trivial qualities of mere manipulation. And it has caused many towering reputations, both of the long past and of yesterday, to take great falls. Not the least interesting part of this is that it has occurred simultaneously with the perfection of the modern techniques in photography and photographic process which have made adequate reproductions of the older prints both possible and common. The collectors, like the greater public, are finally discovering that what counts in original prints is pretty much the same thing that counts in painting and design, and not mere slickness in traditional rituals of technique. Someone said about Blaise Pascal that he had no style, he merely had important ideas which he expressed in such form that there was no difference between his words and his thought.

65. Portion of a lithograph of a Bull Fight, by Goya. About 1825. Reduced.

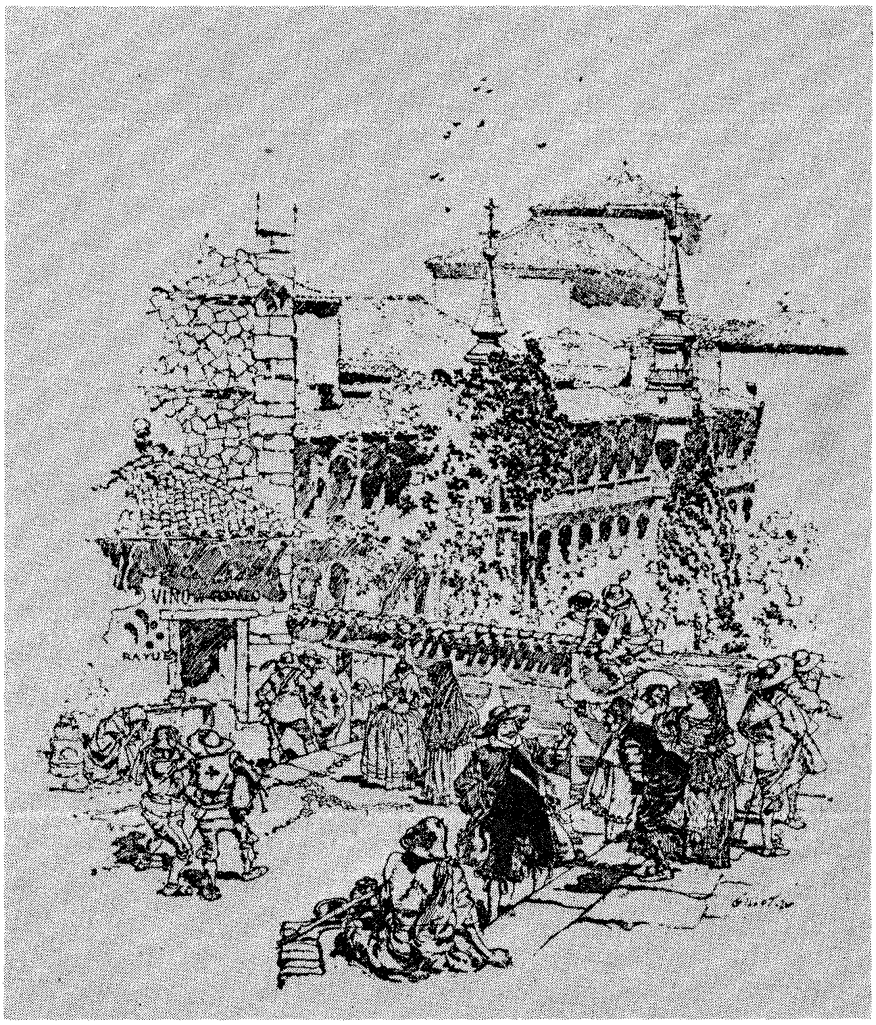
66. Portion of Delacroix's lithograph of 'La Sœur de Du Guesclin'. About actual size.

67. Portion of Daumier's lithograph 'Un zeste! un rien!', from *Le Boulevard.* Reduced.

68. Portion of Manet's lithograph after his painting of 'Les Courses'. About actual size.

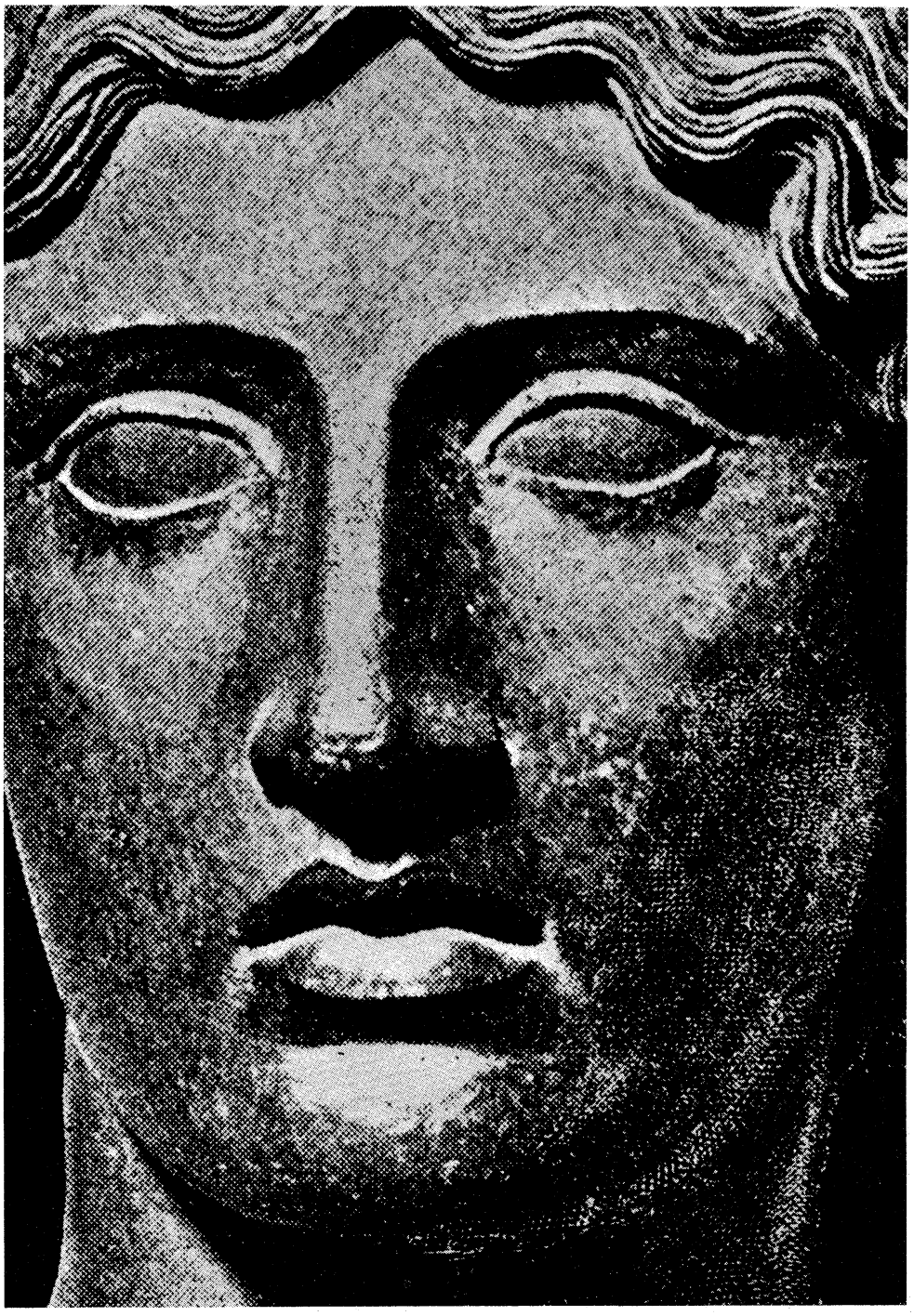


69. Engraved illustration of a Roman wall painting, from Winckelmann's *History of Ancient Art*, 1880. About actual size.



70. Line block after a pen drawing by Vierge, for *Pablo de Segovie*, 1881. About actual size.

71. Portion of a grain half-tone after a drawing by Natoire, from *L'Artiste*, 1882. Enlarged.



72. Portion of an early cross line half-tone after a photograph of a classical sculpture, from Furtwängler's *Meisterwerke der Griechischen Plastik*, 1893. Enlarged.

# VI

# PICTORIAL STATEMENT WITHOUT SYNTAX THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

DURING the nineteenth century there were a great many experiments and trials of novel technical ideas in print-making. Many of these techniques had appreciable merits from practical points of view, but inevitably most of them vanished very rapidly as still newer methods were introduced. In the lack of any extrinsic evidence it is frequently difficult if not impossible to tell from the face of a relief print made in the middle years of the century just what process was actually used in its making.

The adherents of the old traditional techniques, in their losing battle for supremacy, set up an idea which for a long time influenced not only the critics but the general public. It was that, somehow, the old processes were intrinsically more artistic than the newer ones. In the print-collecting game there were purely verbalistic definitions of what was artistic that had nothing to do with either design or expression. Thus there gradually grew up in